

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 167743

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, AF

SUBJECT: PANAM-ARIANA RELATIONSHIP

REF: KABUL 4965

1. SUMMARY: PANAM CHAIRMAN SEAWELL STATED ON JANUARY 29 TO AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DUBS THAT PANAM WOULD MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH ARIANA. END SUMMARY

2. IN A MEETING AT PANAM HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK CITY ON JANUARY 29, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DUBS DESCRIBED CURRENT U.S. POLICY TOWARD NEW REGIME IN KABUL TO PANAM CHAIRMAN SEAWELL AND PANAM EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT JAMES FEET. IN ESSENCE, DUBS NOTED, U.S. POLICY WAS TO KEEP U.S. OPTIONS OPEN TOWARD NEW GOVERNMENT AND TO AVOID ACTIONS WHICH WOULD PRESENT REGIME WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RELY INCREASINGLY ON THE SOVIET UNION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT. TARAKI GOVERNMENT HAS INDICATED IT WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND HAS NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT WISHES THE AID RELATIONSHIP TO CONTINUE. U.S. WILL BE CLOSELY MONITORING ACTIONS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE
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SUBSTANCE OF ITS RELATIONS WITH BOTH PAKISTAN AND IRAN, WHICH ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE WELCOMED WORD BY THE NEW REGIME THAT IT WANTS TO CONTINUE THE PANAN-ARIANA RELATIONSHIP. DUBS THEN OUTLINED, ALONG LINES SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 5 OF REFTEL, WHY WE BELIEVE IT IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH THE U.S. AND PANAM THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP CONTINUE FOR THE

TIME BEING.

3. CHAIRMAN SEAWELL SAID PANAM HAD ALSO BEEN SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY ITS INITIAL CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS OF THE NEW REGIME. HE INDICATED THAT PANAM WILL CONTINUE ITS PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH ARIANA AND THAT PANAM COULD OBVIOUSLY PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN HELPING ARIANA INTRODUCE A NEW AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE DC-10 OR THE L-1011 INTO THE ARIANA FLEET. SEAWELL NOTED THAT VICE PRESIDENT ERSKINE RICE WAS ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE ARIANA BOARD IN LONDON WHERE A DECISION ON THE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF A NEW AIRCRAFT WAS EXPECTED TO BE MADE.

4. VICE PRESIDENT FRED AURELIO HAD PLANNED TO ATTEND MEETING BUT WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND BECAUSE OF URGENT BUSINESS ELSEWHERE.

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH DUBS PRIOR TO MEETING WITH SEAWELL, PANAM OFFICIAL CHARLES TAYLOR EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER NEW REGIME'S REMOVAL OF ARIANA'S CHIEF MAINTENANCE OFFICER AND ALSO ONE OF ITS OPERATIONS OFFICERS. HE WAS UNAWARE OF THEIR CURRENT STATUS. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION EMBASSY CAN PROVIDE. VANCE

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